

## News and Views

Wow! What exciting times we have ahead!

The NRTRC appreciates CMS' recognition of the advantages and benefits that telemedicine provides and their interest in reducing the burden and the duplicative efforts of traditional credentialing and privileging processes for Medicare-participating hospitals. We have submitted comments to the [proposed changes to the Conditions of Participation for Hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals](#). But, we also asked that CMS take the next step and evaluate the need for changes in the Conditions of Participation for ambulatory and other healthcare organizations, as well as, the possibility of providing "by proxy" flexibility on credentialing and privileging between hospitals and certain ambulatory care providers.

I'll now begin preparing our comment to CMS' proposed new coverage (reimbursement) for telehealth services that will take effect January 1, 2011. It is exciting to see progress from CMS on both credentialing/privileging and reimbursement.

Christina Thielst  
NRTRC Executive Director

### **CMS Proposes New Medicare Telehealth Coverage and Other Changes to Physician Fee Schedule**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has proposed some additional CPT and HCPCS codes for coverage when services are provided by telehealth. Several of ATA's requests to expand coverage were included in the proposed rule, which is open for public comment until August 24. The proposal includes changes to cardiac remote monitoring codes and the following new coverage areas for telehealth services, effective January 1, 2011:

**Subsequent nursing facility care services** using CPT codes 99307-99310

**Subsequent hospital care services** provided after initial treatment and admission, using CPT codes 99231 and 99232

**health and behavior assessment and intervention** using CPT code 96153 - Group and 96154 - Family-with-Patient

**Group medical nutrition services** using CPT code 97804

Individual and group services related to **kidney disease education** using HCPCS codes G0420 and G0421

**Individual and group diabetes self management training**, not including at least 1 hour of in-person injection training, using HCPCS codes G0108 and G0109

For more information refer to the [31 page telehealth excerpt](#) or [complete 1250-page proposed rulemaking](#).

## New Broadband Grants and Loans

Grants and loans totaling \$795M for 66 new broadband projects across the country were announced earlier this month. Our region is represented by projects in Alaska, Montana (3), Oregon (3), Utah and Wyoming/Idaho. For a list of these projects, contact [thielsc@nrtrc.org](mailto:thielsc@nrtrc.org).

## Telehealth Technology Assessment Center

The new [Telehealth Technology Assessment Center](#) offers [technology assessment information and resources](#). The [Digital Camera Toolkit](#) is available now, and the desktop video application tool is scheduled for release this summer. Garret Spargo, TTAC's Director, is co-located in Alaska with [ANTHC - AFHCAN](#) and is active in the NRTRC Technical Committee.

## Educational Opportunities

The [Southern California Telemedicine Learning Center](#) is offering a *Telemedicine Executive Overview* interactive one-day telemedicine training on Friday, July 30, 2010 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. For more information, contact (858) 534-3940 or [ocme@ucsd.edu](mailto:ocme@ucsd.edu).

Swedish Medical Center is offering live internet broadcasts and online CME courses around stroke topics. The [live internet broadcasts](#) are currently held on the first Wednesday of the month at 12noon (PT). Online trainings include topics such as Stroke Systems of Care, TIA, and Intracerebral Hemorrhage and SAH and generally last 15-30 minutes. Please contact Sherene Schlegel at [Sherene.Schlegel@swedish.org](mailto:Sherene.Schlegel@swedish.org) for more information.

[Emerging Best Practices for Telepsychology Services](#) at the APA Convention, August 2010.

## Education Program Follow-up

Slides from the telestroke panel held during the June, [2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Washington State Stroke Symposium](#) are now [available, along with a variety of other stroke resources](#).

NRTRC's presentation to state speech and hearing program coordinators earlier this year was highlighted in the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association May 18 newsletter](#).

Program presentations (slides and audio) to the [Rural Health Resource Center Flex Program](#) and [Oregon Office of Rural Health Flex Webinar Learning Series](#) are also available.

**Volunteer Needed:** To assist staff with planning for the NRTRC annual report.  
Contact [thielsc@nrtrc.org](mailto:thielsc@nrtrc.org)